Islamophobia in the aftermath of the Sri Lankan Easter Attacks in the Daily Mirror A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT: This paper reports the consequences of the Easter attacks that hit Sri Lanka two years ago through applying critical discourse analysis as a main area of study. It is believed that there is hidden strategies and unequal power relations in the news on this topic. It is hoped that the study uncovers this agenda through the use of language. As a result, the researchers employ two models of analysis to explore the interrelations of the linguistic values and the ideological strategies embedded in this discourse. The study equips Fairclough's model for linguistic analysis and van Dijk's ideological square as a main analytical framework of examining the data. In doing so, the researchers select one article from the Daily Mirror as a Sri Lankan newspaper to examine and investigate to reveal the state of Muslims in this troubled country. The findings of the linguistic analysis show that lexical expressions have a major role in presenting the central and ideological contested words that reflect the ideological impact of the editor and his participants in the text. Consequently, the findings of the grammatical analysis display "modality" for being the most frequent value in this discourse, followed directly with negative sentences, passive sentences and nominalizations. For more emphasis on pronouns, the subjective pronouns are the most frequent ones in the text. As for the ideological analysis, the study reveals the negative image of people in general and the Muslims in particular. Ultimately, this study delivers the vital link between the linguistic values and the ideological values for other linguistic researchers and critical discourse analysts.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Easter Attacks, Muslims, Linguistic Values, Ideological Values.

1. Introduction

Fairclough (1989,p. 4) argues that the primary goal critical discourse analysis, through examining language, is to raise people's awareness of exploitative social relations. For decades, many linguists made great contributions to the development of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) according to the papers that published constantly about this field. Basically, when we come to the roots of CDA, "Critical Linguistics" could never be overlooked. This term is first created in the book written by Fowler entitled *Language and Control* (Fowler et al., 1979). According to Fowler's masterpiece, Critical Linguistic Analysis or CLA could be determined as a "powerful tool for the study of ideological processes, which mediate relationships of power and control" (Fowler et al., 1979, p.186).

According to the different research directions of the CDA, different approaches and studies are presented in this domain for instance, Fairclough approach which focuses on sociology and systemic functional linguistics as a theoretical and linguistic basis of analysis whilst, Wodak concentrates on the historical context that includes political and social studies. As for van Dijk, he puts special emphasis on linguistic and cognitive analysis with extra study on semantic, pragmatic, stylistic and syntactic features in media discourse especially in the case of minorities.

Journalism for Fairclough (1992, p.113) is a general area influenced by power and ideology, which in turn influences people's social lives and knowledge. With respect to media texts, this can be recognised since texts are continuously formed by their inventors' ideologies and opinions including writers, publishers, editors and owners of the publishing companies. Further, media text plays a major role to shape the readers' perspectives of the outside world.

In this respect, many scholars put their theoretical frameworks to analyse texts with respect to CDA, such as Fairclough and van Dijk. Due to this, the study depends on Fairclough's model of analysing discourse (2001) in addition to van Dijk's ideological square (2006) to explore media texts. Fairclough's model is suitable for analysing this kind of media texts since it examines the linguistic features that have powerful and ideological references. Ideology for Fairclough (1992,pp. 87-89) is a social concept which is related to the text and its discursive practices. van Dijk's model from the other hand is mainly selected for more focus on the term ideology and its effect to reveal the hidden agenda of the journalists and its actors inside the text and how they can influence the target readers with their positive and negative views.

As a matter of fact, this study critically examines the news text relating to the coverage of the Sri Lankan newspaper, the "Daily Mirror" of the consequences of the Easter attacks that struck Sri Lanka a year ago. This study explores the discourse linguistically and ideologically in order to detect the hidden meanings through the use of language.

2. Literature Review

In this section, a prelude to CDA , its main concepts, and an overview about Sri Lanka attacks is provided as follows

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis
2.2 Main Concepts of CDA

Fairclough's (1995b, p.1) defined CDA as "an analytic framework – a theory and method for studying language in its relation to power and ideology". Consequently, Fairclough (2003,p. 210) put its more clearly that CDA has the ability to accommodate appropriate methods, like corpus linguistics. Thus, it is considered the best set of methodologies. As Fairclough (1989,p.15) stated that

"language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power" (1989, p. 15). Besides, he (1995, p.20) clarified that CDA denotes to any theory interested in criticism of *ideology* and the influence of *power*. Mainly, Fairclough (1989,p. 46), discussed that power within discourse means the powerful members who control and restrict contributions from non-powerful members.

From different perspective, Blommaert (2005, p.158-159) pointed out that since it is a vital area of analysis, ideology is an enormously vague concept and anyone seeking to scrutinize it, will encounter many different definitions. Moreover, he (2005,p.167) added that ideology is regarded as a part of power, not a separate unit. In specific words, Fairclough (1992,p. 88-89) described ideology as one of the central characteristics of text and context. Thus, ideology could be viewed as a manifestation of the power that is constructed in the social contexts where the text is generated.

2.3 Sri Lanka Terror Attacks: An Overview

As many remember a year ago from now that Easter Sunday explosions at three churches and hotels in Sri Lanka murdered more than 200 people and injured 450 according to the press releases of police officials, in the first big attack on the island of the Indian Ocean since the civil war that ended ten years ago (Reuters, 2019, para.1).

Winsor and Jovanovic (2019) confirmed that the Islamic State organisation claimed responsibility for a series of coordinated bombings of churches and upscale hotels. This terrorist organisation provided no evidence to support this confirmation, which was initially referred to in an Arabic statement propagated on Tuesday by its Amaq news agency, that the attackers were "the Islamic State troops," according to the translation of the SITE Intelligence Group, a corporation that monitors the activities of radicals around the world.

With more emphasis on the governmental reaction, Perrigo (2019) reported that the Sri Lankan defence minister Ruwan Wijewardene stated that the attacks on his country were in retribution for the terror attack that happened a month ago on New Zealand Muslims, in which the death toll reached 50 citizens. He gave no immediate evidence except for this statement "the preliminary investigations have revealed that what happened in Sri Lanka was in retaliation for the attack against Muslims in Christchurch", and the minister's statement was directed to the Sri Lankan parliament (para.3).

From another viewpoint, Investigators presented Zahran Hashim as the leader of the National Thowheed Jamaath, that implemented the highly coordinated bombings on Easter Sunday. After a while, the Islamic State claimed to publish an image of eight alleged bombers. One of them was seen standing in the middle and was supposed to be Hashim, whereas the other jihadists faces were masked with a scarf (Srinivasan & Haider, 2019).

In the light of the consequences of the attacks, Ethirajan (2019) reported that Islamists allied with unknown local groups to target hotels and churches in Colombo and the eastern areas of Sri Lanka and to kill a huge number of citizens and even foreigners. The devastating attack carried out by ISIS traumatized the entire nation. It is noteworthy to mention that "Muslims make up nearly 10% of Sri Lanka's 22 million people, who are predominantly Sinhalese Buddhists" (Ethirajan, 2019, para.10).

In fact, terrorists continually respond to the environment in which they work. The Islamic State and its associations are no dissimilar. The following months of the Easter attacks witnessed long-term ethnic and religious conflicts in Sri Lanka, as the Muslim community was subjected to racist campaigns and violence arranged by Sinhala Buddhist radicals to spread fear and distrust

among many Muslims in this time, and the ISIS story continues to resonate in the youth's vulnerable minds (Gunasingham, 2020).

3. Methodology

This section is devoted to present the methodology conducted by the researchers to analyses the selected data.

3.1 Fairclough's Model of CDA 2001

Fairclough (1992, p.63) asserted that "the use of language in society is a form of social practice rather than individual activity". In this paper, the researchers deal with Fairclough's concept of CDA, since his model is the nearest to linguistics and because he is recognised as CDA's "most impressive and influential practitioner" (Widdowson 2004,p. 90).

According to Fairclough (2001, pp.21-22), three dimensions of analysis are presented; description, interpretations and explanation. The first dimension which is the *description* that provides the linguistic structures of the text, while the second dimension which is *interpretation* that embodies the link between text and interaction, and the final dimension is *explanation* that focuses on the relation between interaction and the social context. With more specific words, this framework is "an attempt to bring together three analytical traditions, each of which is indispensable for discourse analysis" (Fairclough,1992, p.73).

Since this study will be concerned with vocabulary and grammar, the only seven questions of Fairclough's model are applicable as shown below:

3.1.1 Vocabulary

A. What experiential features do expressions have?
B. What relational features do expressions have?
c. What expressive features do expressions have?
D. What metaphors features do expressions have?

3.1.2 Grammar

E. What experiential characteristics do grammatical features contain?
F. What relational characteristics do grammatical features contain?
G. What expressive characteristics do grammatical features contain?

3.2 Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model of Analysis 2006

Van Dijk (2006,p. 734) elucidated that "ideologies often have a polarized structure, reflecting competing or conflicting group membership and categorization in ingroups and outgroups". These basic structures also occur in more precise political situations, such as racist positions about immigration and finally in the biased subjective mental models of groups. Such models control the discourse contents.

Accordingly, a lot of research shows that the ideological discourse is characterised by the next comprehensive strategies called the "ideological square" that is employed to "emphasize Our good things, emphasize Their bad things, de-emphasize Our bad things, de-emphasize Their good things" (van Dijk, 2006,p. 734). These overall strategies are utilised in all stages of meaning, action as well as form of text and conversation.

In sum, this model is appropriate for this study as long as it is concerned with examining media texts that explore the conditions of minorities within a particular country and how other pressure groups control the conduct of their affairs.

3.3 The Corpus of The Study

The single article was selected from the *Daily mirror*, a daily newspaper published from Colombo, Sri Lanka. This newspaper was produced in the English language. It was first founded in 1996 as a weekly newspaper and then turned into a daily one in 1999, owned by Wijeya Newspapers

Ltd (Daily Mirror Epaper, 2020). It was chosen to deliver the news of the impact of Easter attacks that happened in its area a year ago.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 The Analysis of "Stigmatized and stereotyped: everyday realities of SL Muslims"

By: Kamanthi Wickramasinghe

Basically, the media is the link between the ruling political forces and the public. It is "one of the most important instruments through which those in power seek to influence the political thinking of their subjects" (Ojo, 2003, p. 829). To uncover the power relations and hidden ideologies through language use, the current study examines the experiential, relational and expressive values of words and sentences in this text by applying Fairclough's model of ten questions (2001) and van Dijk's ideological square model (2006). The researchers start their analysis with the most important issues referenced in this discourse, such as "*violence*", "*Covid-19*", "*tensions*", "*cremation*" and so on.

The editor elaborates "*violence*" since it is overworded six times in the text as follows:

●A year has passed since anti-Muslim violence broke out after the Easter Sunday bombings. It was on May 13, 2019 violence spread in a major way with rioters destroying and setting fire to houses and places of business belonged to Muslims. During the violence, some mosques too were vandalised. Quoting Muslim Aid Sri Lanka, a UK-based Islamic Charity Organisation, it was reported that nine civilians in the Gampaha and Kurunegala Districts had allegedly died in the violence. Mobs further damaged or destroyed 159 houses and 196 Muslim-owned businesses. (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

The editor explains the state of Muslims after Sri Lanka attacks that occurred one year ago. Muslims are subjected to diverse types of violence, such as demolishing their places, vandalising their mosques and targeting them by rioters, etc. All these nearly synonymous terms give the reader the opportunity to see what Muslims experienced in this country. The editor skillfully employs rewordings and overwordings that have near meanings in simple and clear clauses. For more emphasis on the lexical analysis in this text, the frequency of the above mentioned connotations will be epitomized in Table (1) below:

Table 1
Keyword frequencies and their associates

Main Terms	Frequency	Associated Words	Frequency
Violence	6	Anti- Muslim violence	1
		Vandalised	1
		Damaged	1
		Destroy(-ed)(-ing)	2
		Targeted	3
		Demoralized	1
		Riot(s) (-ers)	2
		Threat (-ened)	2

The editor continues to narrate his information when he mentions the word "Covid-19" eight times to indicate the medical condition afflicting the whole world. From a broader view, Muslims are blamed for spreading the virus through media platforms and here is a clear indication of the negative outcome Muslims face during this delicate time. All the mentioned terms and concepts are meaningfully related.

In addition, the editor explicates some ideological expressions, such as the term "media" that is overworded six times to express the ideology of those interested in. Terms, such as "some media" and "electronic media" are ideologically contested words that indicate the controversial effect they play to the target audience. The editor cites the statements of "Amen", the president of Sri Lankan council who negatively confirms that the media has a role in accusing Muslims of being the main factor of spreading the virus and he "positively" appreciates the role of the Health Ministry for providing the required instructions to the media. The term "media" is considered a double-edged sword for spreading good and bad news according to the ideologies of its employees. As shown down there, the frequencies of the abovementioned terms are illustrated in Table (2):

Table 2
Keyword frequencies and their associates

Main Terms	Frequency	Associated Words	Frequency
Covid-19	8	Covid-19 outbreaks	3
		Covid-19 patients	1
		Coronavirus victims	1
		Health crisis	1
		Infected	4
		Medication	2
		Ailments	1
		Eradication measures	1
		Isolated	2
		Congested area	1
		Quarantine (d)	2
		World health organisation	2
Media	6	Some media	2
		Electronic media	1

With more emphasis on overwordings, the editor pays more attention to another complex issue that Muslims face in this country which is "*cremation*". This procedure is being performed legally according to Sri Lankan policy for the deceased infected with the virus. The term "*fear*" is cited twice to express the concerns of Muslims of being "*cremated*" even if they die from other diseases. With more ideological words, the editor emphasizes the role of "*racist elements*" twice in this text who have the power to convince the public that "*burial*" is a dangerous factor in water pollution. The term "burials" is overworded four times to focus on the Muslims' desire for burial rather than cremation according to their ceremonials.

With an increased concentration on the language of numbers, the term "*cremated*" and its connotations are mentioned eight times, whereas the term "*burials*" and its associates are denoted four times only to indicate the power of extremist forces that refuse the Muslims' wish and support the government's cremation policy. In accordance with that, the editor hints that there is a "political agenda" behind this refusal. As illustrated below, all of the aforementioned terms are listed in the following table

Table 3
Keyword frequencies and their associates

Main Words	Frequency	Associated Words	Frequency
Cremation (s)	4	Mandatory cremation	1
		Cremate bodies	1
		Cremated	2
		Cremation of bodies	1
		Sealed-body bags	1
Graves	3	Deeper graves	1
		Mass graves	1
		Graves	2
		Final rites	1
Racist	2	Racist activities	1
		Racist elements	1
		Extremist elements	2

Another hint that is denoted by the editor that Muslims' demands are refused since they did not vote for the new president. The editor mentions the verb "*vote*" three times as a possible answer to why Muslims' wishes are denied. Moreover, the editor puts forward the problem of "*communal*" that is overworded several times with synonymous terms, such as "*communal conflict*", "*communal tension*" and "*communal violence*" to indicate the power of internal tension the whole country faces. This kind of meaning relation aims to express the reality about what happens inside the country.

The editor quotes the statements of Ali Sabry, the constitutional lawyer who is impressed with the preventive measures taken by the government to contain the epidemic. The editor appends many overwordings, such as "*reconciliation*", "*progress*", "*co-existence*" and "*collaborate*" referring to the audience who needs to unite in order to live in peace. All the mentioned terms are illustrated in Table (4) below:

Table 4
Keyword frequencies and their associates

Main Words	Frequency	Associated Words	Frequency
Communal	4	Communal tensions	2
		Communal conflicts	1
		Communal violence	1
Vote	2	Vote (d)	3
Reconciliation	2	Collaborate	1
		Unite	2
		Co-existence	2
		Progress	2
		Work together	1

In the grammatical strand, the sentences mentioned in this article are mainly (SV) and (SVO) to clearly describe the event since these sentences carry agents, patients, reasons and responsibility for taking actions. Employing such kinds of sentences has experiential values that give the reader the ability to determine the action and its performer. With the light of such sentences, the editor focuses

on the positive and negative effect of the media on people in general and Muslims in particular, according to its users.

Other than that, few *passive sentences* are indicated, such as:
- "During the violence, some mosques too were vandalized" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)
- "It was reported that nine civilians in the Gampaha and Kurunegala Districts had allegedly died in the violence" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)
- "The Muslim community was again targeted through mandatory cremation policies and stigmatized as virus carriers" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

The above sentences are employed to hide the identity of the attackers or sometimes replace it by the word "*mob*" as a general term. These sentences are with no clear agency. The first quotation generally contains declarative clauses with an emphasis on the negative impact of violence perpetrated by these people as outgroups. The editor makes it very clear when he notes that the last year's attacks and the medical crisis affect the whole Sri Lankan community.
- "Speaking on the health crisis, he said <u>many people in cramped areas had been infected</u> with COVID-19" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).
- "So the <u>Muslim community was easily targeted</u>" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).
- "They fear <u>they will be cremated</u>" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).
- "None of <u>these proposals were accepted</u>" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the above passive sentences, the editor conceals the identity of the agents. In the first quotation, the editor makes a general reference not to mention the names of the infected areas since they are a lot especially in the heart of Colombo. The second one hides the identity of the side who cremates bodies and the forces supporting them. The third quotation makes it very obvious that Muslims' demands are denied with no more details.
- "Whenever a <u>Muslim person was infected</u> <u>they were taken for treatment</u> and eventually <u>the communities were isolated, tested and quarantined</u>. <u>They are being treated well</u> in quarantine facilities <u>where even 'Ifthar' breaking fast is being done</u>" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the final extract, the editor quotes the statement of Sabry who employs a passive sentence to implicitly refer to the power of the government that treats its people very well and to refute the allegations of its negligence towards a certain group, especially Muslims who are treated excellently in quarantine facilities by providing them "Ifthar" meals on an ongoing basis.

In the concept of *nominalization*, the editor adds nominalized terms for more emphasis on the action more than its creator, such as:
- "Burial is a basic right for Muslims" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).
- "Burials are taking place in over 80 countries including Italy, Spain, the UK and so on" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

The above nominalizations are employed for more focus on the rituals of Muslims who believe in the idea of burying their bodies rather than being cremated. As such, Sri Lankan government leaders reject this wish.

With the light of experiential values, the article utlises *negative sentences* as exceptions for many issues, such as:
- "However we thank the Health Ministry for issuing media guidelines when reporting on COVID-19 patients. At the start people <u>weren't</u> aware of the situation" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

●"Ameen noted many mosques had been distributing essential items and communities were looking after each other. "There are <u>no</u> communal tensions as far as I'm concerned" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

● "Our only concern is about the cremation of bodies. Because burial is a basic right for Muslims. According to Islam we <u>cannot</u> cremate bodies" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the first negative sentence, the editor positively refers to the Ministry of Health in the country of warning people of the danger of the virus and at the same time, he criticizes people since they do not understand this complex situation, while in the second negation, the editor delivers another point of view when he quotes the announcement of the head of the Islamic Council who denies the existence of any internal tensions. In the third sentence, he makes it very obvious that Muslims do not agree with the government's cremation policy since it conflicts with their religious teachings.

● "Muslims and Christians <u>never</u> had any problems with each other. Some misguided elements were used to plan the attacks… . If you look at the Minuwangoda riots, <u>not</u> a single Catholic or Christian was involved in them," he said" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

With more emphasis on unity among minorities in this country, the editor quotes Ahamed's statement who asserts that there is no interfaith conflict in Sri Lanka even the attackers are just radical individuals implementing the attacks. Additionally, he uses negation again for making an exception this time when he argues that no Christian has a hand in Minuwangoda attacks.

●Speaking on the health crisis, he said many people in cramped areas had been infected with COVID-19. "The infected persons were living in areas from Colombo 10 to 15. These are densely populated areas and living spaces are <u>not</u> even 8 by 10 feet. Since many people <u>cannot</u> sleep inside these houses, they take turns to sleep." He noted there were <u>no</u> communal conflicts in these communities. (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

In the above extract, the editor uses multiple negative sentences to make generalizations that the virus does not only spread in Muslim regions. The virus outbreaks in the capital of Sri Lanka which is Colombo, where there are wide open areas and no internal struggles.

●"We have said we would dig deeper graves. But <u>none</u> of these proposals were accepted. It therefore looks like a political agenda because Muslims did <u>not</u> vote for the President." (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

In the above paragraph, the editor expresses the ejection of political leaders in his country of what Muslims want when they ask the government to hand over the bodies of their dead for burial without any positive response. With the last negation, the editor explains the reason for this rejection.

●"If a professional body has evidence to prove why burials are <u>not</u> suitable, we will accept it" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

The above negation is employed for more emphasis on the idea of "burial" that has a big role in the Muslim religion.

● He noted the Muslim community did <u>not</u> vote for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa due to extremist elements supporting him. "Muslims and minorities in general felt threatened they would have to face consequences. If <u>not</u> for racist activities more than 50% of Muslims would have voted for him. After his post-election speech, minorities were starting to have faith in him. If <u>not</u> for COVID-19 there would have been a sizeable shift in the Muslim community

supporting the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna for the general election." (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the above excerpt, the editor uses negative sentences to clarify the real reason why Muslims do not vote for the current president and he also makes an exception when he imposes the effect of Covid-19 that prevents them from supporting him.

●"We need to stop community dissension and be the type of Sri Lankans described in patriotic songs and speeches. We sing songs and give speeches, but we <u>haven't</u> walked the talk" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the aforementioned negation, the editor explains his frustration of people being citizens with no real actions. He negatively criticizes his community for being different Sri Lankans than the ones portrayed in songs.

● The government <u>cannot</u> work on its own, and people must unite and collaborate."

He said initially the media had played a role in creating communal tensions,and that was regrettable. "Of course people <u>didn't</u> understand the ground realities because Keselwatta is a congested area. (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

In the final excerpt, the editor quotes the statement of the constitutional lawyer who supports his government and positively describes it since it has no ability to act alone in front of all these difficulties. On the other hand, he negatively describes people in general and the media in particular because they are part of the communal conflict.

In the meaning of *modality*, Fairclough inserts two kinds of modality: relational and expressive as we can notice below:

●"We <u>must</u> look at this problem together rather than from an individual perspective" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

●"We <u>cannot</u> cremate bodies" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

●"If the Muslim community had fully supported the attacks, it <u>would</u> have been like the LTTE" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the first quotation, the editor employs the relational modality through the operator "*must*" which indicates an obligation to seeing our problems and trying to solve them. In the second quotation, he inserts the expressive modality by the operator "*can*" that denotes certainty since Muslims definitely have no other option but to bury their dead bodies. In the final quotation, the editor uses the relational modality though the operator "*would*" that refers to the intention process since Muslims has no intent to support the terrorists.

●"Since many people <u>cannot</u> sleep inside these houses, they take turns to sleep" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

●"But when one person gets infected, it <u>can</u> spread like wildfire" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the above two extracts, the editor inserts two modal verbs; '*cannot*' and '*can*' with the same reference since the verbs indicate certainty when people surely have no ability to sleep in confined places. Similarly, the second verb refers to focusing on transmitting the virus if anyone gets infected. Both verbs represent expressive modality.

●"But racist elements say burials <u>would</u> contaminate water. But the WHO says the virus <u>may</u> -live inside a dead body for just two to four hours" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

●"We have said we <u>would</u> dig deeper graves" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the abovementioned extracts, the editor uses "*would*" twice to denote certainty since racist elements and Muslims insist on their views. In spite of the expressive modality, the editor presents two clashing ideologies, each one trying to prove that it is correct. With the same type of modality, he employs the operator "*may*" that exemplifies the probability that the virus survives several hours.

●"If a professional body has evidence to prove why burials are not suitable, we <u>will</u> accept it" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

●"Muslims and minorities in general felt threatened they <u>would</u> have to face consequences. If not for racist activities more than 50% of Muslims <u>would</u> have voted for him" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

●"If not for COVID-19 there <u>would</u> have been a sizeable shift in the Muslim community supporting the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna for the general election" (Wickramasinghe, 2020).

In the previous quotations, the editor inserts two kinds of operators; "*will*" and "*would*" to show probability. The editor puts up hypothetical and unrealistic situations to express his ideology towards his government, which refuses to recognise the rights of minorities who face threats from extremist sides on the one hand, and the risk of a health crisis on the other hand.

●"We <u>must</u> keep differences aside and stand up together as Sri Lankans" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

●"Everybody <u>must</u> contribute to build harmony and think how each one of us <u>can</u> contribute to make this a peaceful place to live in" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

In the above quotations, the editor applies the operator "*must*" twice in this extract for different references. The first indicates necessity and the other refers to obligation since as one community, we need to unite together and stop all these tensions. "*Can*", another operator is also included to express ability since everyone has the potential to build his country. In simple words, these extracts have relational and expressive modalities that refer to various meanings.

●"The government <u>cannot</u> work on its own, and people <u>must</u> unite and collaborate" (Wickramasinghe, 2020)

In the final quotation, two types of modality are illustrated since the first verb "*cannot*" denotes the inability of the government to act on its own. Besides, the other verb "*must*" that is imposed as a reference of obligation directed to people to cooperate together and help their government achieve its goals.

Finally, employing pronouns is a necessity to deliver various meanings to the target readers, such as:

Table 5
Frequency of subjective, possessive and objective pronouns

Subjective	Occurrence	Possessive	Occurrence	Objective	Occurrence
He	8	His	1	Him	3
I	1	Its	3	Us	3
She	1	Our	1	Them	1
We	13	Their	1		
They	10				

In the Daily Mirror discourse, several deictic pronouns are employed and repeated many times to convey different meanings. It can be noticed that the *subjective* pronouns, such as "*we*" and "*they*" are the most frequent pronouns in this article. The first pronoun that is repeated thirteen times to indicate the meaning of unity and synergy among the components of this country who believes in pluralism and equality between minorities, whilst the latter pronoun is reiterated ten times to show the other side; the "Muslims" who demand their rights with no response from the government.

In the light of the *possessive* pronouns, the pronoun "*its*" is iterated three times to implicitly symbolize the power of the government over the people since it is described as an integrated institution that meets its citizens' requirements.

As for the *objective* pronouns, the editor applies three of them. Mainly, "*him*" and "*us*" are the most frequent pronouns in this article since they are repeated three times each. The first pronoun is directed to the president since Muslims do not vote for him in the elections, and the latter pronoun refers to the meaning of unity and solidarity ,and the rejection of religious and ethnic tensions.

5. Findings and Discussions

As noticed above, the analysis was divided into two dimensions; Linguistic and ideological analysis. The findings of the linguistic analysis were also subdivided into lexical and grammatical layers to indicate a full understanding of the entire article.

At the outset, the lexical analysis showed the importance of lexical choices that gave diverse meanings to the text. Terms, such as "violence", "Covid-19", "media", "cremation" and "communal" were the most common expressions in this article. These terms referred to the negative outcome that people faced in general and Muslims in particular. Such terms, along with their bad impact on people, express the challenges minorities suffer due to the negative impact of them that attract violence to this country which lives in a continuous sectarian and ethnic tussle.

With the grammatical stance, the most frequent sentences in this text were in the (SV) and (SVO) formula. These sentences were explicit and clear in the way they presented the agents, patients and action. Besides, employing eight passive sentences has a significant role in revealing that the Muslim community is targeted by different factors and reasons with no obvious references.

With more emphasis on the event itself, nominalization was entered twice to focus on the idea of burial and how this process was very important and crucial to describe the state of Muslims. Moreover, negation had another significance since the editor employed ten extracts with negative references to make exceptions for Muslims' wishes that were rejected by their government.

Regarding the findings of modality, the editor applied ten expressive modalities and five relational ones in return. Expressive modalities delivered meanings of certainty, probability, ability and inability, whereas the relational modalities conveyed a sense of obligation, intention and necessity.

As for pronouns, the findings showed that the subjective pronouns were the most frequent ones in this discourse since the pronoun "we" was repeated thirteen times and "they" ten times. The pronoun "we" indicates the meaning of togetherness as a single community; No matter how many minorities it contains. On the other hand, the pronoun "they" indicates the Muslim community as a minority that faces several challenges and stolen rights.

According to the ideological analysis, it unmasks the ugly face of the implications of "Easter attacks", "Covid-19" and "the media" since they increase violence, dispute and tension in Sri Lanka. The editor negatively describes the public and Muslims particularly since they do not understand the situation well. In addition, he emphasizes the positive traits of his government which does its utmost to serve its citizens at this complex time. Finally, the editor orders people to unite and cooperate for the progress of their country.

6. Concluding Remarks

To recapitulate, the overall analysis presents many points to be summarized as shown below:
1. The paper provides a critical discourse analysis of the Daily Mirror article from Sri Lanka; the location of Easter attacks that hit the country one year earlier.

2. The lexical analysis reveals central overwordings with synonymous meaning relations that have a major impact on Muslims today.
3. The grammatical stance explores the experiential, relational and expressive values that indicate the status of Muslims as a minority with stolen rights in this country.
4. The ideological analysis sheds light on the negative representation of citizens in general and Muslims in particular on the one hand, and the positive representation of the government on the other hand. This becomes very clear when citizens are portrayed as people who demand a lot from the government that tries hard to do its best for their service.
5. It is believed that the overarching analysis provides the reader with various ideologies that cannot be concealed anymore. This analysis unmasks the implicit ideologies and the hidden power relations that accompany these attacks.

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